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ABSTRACT

Conditions of the principalship that contribute to short-term planning are examined in this report, which also offers strategies for longer range educational integrity. A multiple case study approach was used to explore the experiences of 12 high school principals in 5 states. Over 200 interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, staff, and community members. Major characteristics of the principal's job emerged from the data: brevity, variety, interruption, uncertainty, and fragmentation. Suggested solutions include provision of meaningful internships that incorporate elements of uncertainty and fragmentation, delegation of responsibility, and time management. The recommendation is made for local districts' development of a training package that is comprehensive, flexible, and realistic, providing reflective evaluation and continuous support. Appendices list principals' characteristics and issues identified by them as important. (16 references) (LMI)

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UNCERTAINTY AND FRAGMENTATION: THE "REALITIES" OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

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American leaders of all types, from the President on down, are persistently criticized for using short time frames and lacking long range planning and vision that would give integrity and purposefulness to their enterprises. Educational leaders have received their share of this criticism. The "front line" of the educational battle, the public school, is plagued with this problem as much as many other institutions. This study will attempt to examine the pressures and conditions on principals in the United States which create this work focus on the immediate and short term, and will suggest strategies which would give a longer range integrity to education at the school level.

Using a multiple-case study design, the "realities" of twelve high school principalships in five states were examined. (Demographic characteristics of schools and principals are included in Appendix A.) Data were gathered as part of the Beginning Principal Study, a collaborative project involving researchers at four universities. The current paper is based on content analyses of more than two hundred interviews conducted with the principals and other on site observers such as: teachers, assistant principals, support staff, and community members during the first and third years of the twelve principalships.

Four major themes emerged from analysis of data to

characterize the conditions of work for principals in the United States: brevity, interruption, uncertainty, and fragmentation. For example, the interactions of the 12 principals with faculty, staff, students, parents, and others were numerous and consistently brief. Subjects reported working long hours, using a variety of communication media, and frequently switching topics and work location. They stressed the importance of learning to deal with uncertainty and fragmentation and developing the ability to "shift" rapidly and spontaneously from task to task.

Henry Mintzberg, in The Nature of Managerial Work (1973), found that American managerial work consisted of activity characterized by brevity, variety, and fragmentation; planning and long-term orientations were less in evidence. Other researchers have applied his findings to the principalship. Daresh (1976) comments:

> As Mintzberg (1973) suggests in his study of managers, we must view the principal's job as one of mobility, fragmentation, and urgency. Each of these issues argues against the ability of someone to bring about school improvement in a stable, holistic, and calm fashion.

Also supporting Mintzberg's findings, Martin and Willower (1981) found that principals worked rapidly at many tasks which were highly varied and frequently interrupted.

Demands and Responsibility

One might describe the underlying conditions that give rise to the characteristic brevity, interruption, uncertainty, and fragmentation of the principalship tasks as a very large load of demands and the sense of responsibility that principals

experience when dealing with this load. Fowler and Gettys (1989) have described this situation:

> Another dimension of this heavy responsibility is the large number of people from diverse constituencies whom a principal must take into consideration at all times. An hour or two spent in a principal's office is most instructive in this regard. A steady stream of people arrives and departs: sick or misbehaving students, teachers with a question about a form or a test, parents wanting to enroll their children, custodians with concerns about the curriculum. Meanwhile, the telephone is ringing frequently; parents, Central Office administrators, and other principals have problems, major or minor, which they must discuss with the man or woman in the front office.

Principals and others who worked with them in the current study frequently alluded to such demand pressure being placed on the principal:

> There is just so much that a high school principal has to deal with, (Ed)

> ...you just roll with the punches. It's just a day full of people and paper. (Judy)

> When you are as "hands on" as she (Judy) is, and having and watching over everyone else's job and watching over so many things simultaneously and trying to be actively involved in so many things... I think it is very likely that you are going to find that you can't. (Teacher at Judy's school)

In addition to "people pressure," principals were also subjected to tremendous paperwork demands:

> It's this stupid shit paperwork that you cannot believe. And it's also the mentality that nobody can just solve this problem unless it's the principal (Mary)

> Well, the frustration comes mainly from the paperwork (Harry)

> Too much paperwork and I'm not completing enough of it and I'm not giving enough thanks to people in writing the way that I would like to...it was a frustration too

> knowing that this paperwork is piling up on me faster than I can get it done and when I finish and feel pretty good a new stack arrives (Barbara)

Principals internalize their many demands and amplify them with their own sense of responsibility.

> I feel responsible for every blade of grass that blows in the wind out here. Every piece of dust on this floor. Any everything that comes out of the teacher's mouth in the classroom, I feel responsible for... you can't control all of it. I'm worried about it. (Coach)

> I think the thing that hit hardest was the total responsibility for everything. There is a certain amount of delegation that goes on, but ultimately you're responsible for the whole works. That was something new. (Harry)

> You just do not want to leave a stone uncovered... you are always afraid that you are going to miss something or miss a deadline. (Harry)

Benchley, the only principal who chose not to return for a second year, alluded to a personal conflict between the long hours required to cover perceived school related responsibilities and his family obligations.

> Even when I can be here from 7 in the morning and I stay until 10, 11 at night, I still come home and do more work at home. It has a lot to do with time management, but it still is too much.... You feel you are a part of the school. But, staying away from my family, my three kids and my wife is difficult. For example, last night when I put my kids to sleep, my middle one who is eight years old, said to me, "Are you going to eat dinner with us tomorrow night?' I said, "Sure.' He said, "Hooray!" I wanted to cry because it made me see [that] he sees Daddy as not home. And that's hard. (Benchley)

Lengthy work days were universally reported in the new principals' efforts to cover their new and very broad responsibilities.

> She's always here. If she needs to call you late, or whatever, she's always available. (Teacher at Peggy's school)
>
> He's in the building from seven o'clock in the morning to sometimes midnight. (Teacher at Coach's school)
>
> Yes, he was here [during the summer]. I came over quite a few times and he was always here; going through the files, seeing what was here and what he needed to do. So, he was busy getting organized. (Teacher at Hank's school)

Living up to the responsibilities and demands of the principalships was exacerbated by the four work characteristics of the principalship: brevity, interruption, uncertainty, and fragmentation. Principals commonly attempted to compensate by adjusting their schedules to utilize more personal time to complete tasks which could be done outside the normal school day, or which might facilitate the activities which occurred during the school day by necessity.

Brevity

This general condition of extremely high demand creates the conditions of brevity, interruption, uncertainty, and fragmentation which, according to Mintzberg, were typical of much managerial work. Brevity characterizes principals' work, says Peterson (1981). It is made up of many short duration tasks, such as quick telephone calls, short conversations with teachers concerning students, the skimming of mail, "staccato contacts" with students, and spot intercom announcements. Most tasks lasted only one or two minutes, and fifty activities per hour is not uncommon. Martin and Willower (1981) found that over 80% of observed activities in their study lasted from one to four

minutes. The modal time for several thousand tasks observed was only one minute. Peterson notes that short activities require more energy than longer ones; assessment, information gathering, and decision making are almost instantaneous. It is hard to have a good sense of the quality of the work that one has completed.

Martin and Willower (1981) discovered that 27.5% of the principals time in their study was accounted for by unscheduled meetings which were spontaneous, informal, and brief. The most frequent activity observed was exchanges, simple verbal contacts of one or two sentences between two people that generally lasted around a minute. Phone calls were usually brief information exchanges. Principals often stopped one activity to briefly perform another, performing several tasks simultaneously.

Principals and coworkers at schools included in the current study revealed both positive and negative aspects of brevity. Sensitivity to the work needs and time requirements of others, pressing needs to be available to a large number of others almost simultaneously, and directness can lead to brevity of interactions which may then be interpreted either in a negative or positive light.

> You probably know in a high school, it's difficult to communicate with people because they're so busy doing the tasks that they're doing that to just pull somebody off to the side to pick their brain... There just aren't enough hours in the day. (Teacher at Hank's school referring to Hank)

> She's been very good in showing teachers that she is interested in what goes on in the classroom. Margaret pops in and pops out of classes like a little jumping bean. (Teacher at Margaret's school)

> She is very good at delegating responsibility to AP's. As far as teachers, when she evaluates teachers, she'll go in the front door and go out the back door or just stick her head in for 5 seconds and leave. (Teacher at Barbara's school)

Brevity in procedural aspects of administration is sometimes desired and sometimes not.

> It seemed to me that she wanted to dictate to us what was supposed to be done. She did not want to seek our advice or to plan things with us. (Second teacher at Barbara's school)

> With her being very anxious to implement her new style and because of that desire to move forward quickly, perhaps taking a few administrative shortcuts [referring to perceived authoritarian style] that caused some people to feel negatively about her approach. (Parent at Barbara's school)

> I've sat in with her on a number of meetings and she doesn't always stay to the agenda. It seems to me there's always a little too much digression....That wastes time.... (Second teacher at Barbara's school)

Variety

Mintzberg found that variety was also characteristic of much American managerial work. Peterson (1981) found that the task variety for principals is very great. Tasks may include supervising classroom instruction, talking to textbook salespeople, counseling teachers, and dealing with central administrators. Principal work may include planning, public relations, bookkeeping, budgeting, and personnel management. He noted that the cognitive demands of tasks are extremely variable; problem solving, higher cognitive processes, and short-term memory may all be important at different times. Principals deal with a very wide variety of people. Parkay, Rhodes, Currie & Rao (in press) found that in a ranking of thirteen "internal" issues

by 113 beginning high school principals, "coping with a wide range of tasks" received the highest rating.

Peggy, one of the principals in our study summed it all up with:

> [I] spent 1 hour observing -- the rest in meetings, grievance hearings and talking to people about an incredible variety of things!!! I'm tired! (Peggy)

In a typical one and one half hour September interview, Barbara another first year principal, mentioned and discussed in varying detail during the conversation forty four separate current issues and tasks. They ranged from cleaning up paper in the hallways to expression of her concerns about certain teaching methods being used by some of the teachers. Although no attempt was made to determine how representative Barbara was of all principals nor as to how much time was allocated for each issue, it was noted that roughly equal numbers of managerial and instructional leadership issues were mentioned by Barbara. (A list of the issues and tasks is included in Appendix B.)

Interruption

Sproull (1981), in his study of educational managers found that approximately 14 percent of their daily activities were interrupted. Peterson (1981) cited similar interruptions and likened experiential training of the principal to a surgeon learning to perform an appendectomy by seeing it from a variety of views, each being interrupted by another more pressing operation. Tasks are typically interrupted by other tasks, crises, or problems, therefore, the locus of initiation is often

not within the control of the principal, thus, creating a great deal of work fragmentation and task discontinuity.

Although principals were not shadowed within this study, interruptions were well represented in the current study. First, there were spontaneous interruptions which occurred throughout the day unpredictably and with external locus of control.

> It seems like you start something and then you never finish it because somebody steps in. (Mary)

> Sometimes I will just take someone by the ear and say, "Let's see if he's back there." And, if he's back there and free, people will come right on in. (Hank's head secretary)

There were equally unavoidable externally controlled interruptions which occurred on a more predictable basis.

> I think he's gotten a good feel of the school from the staff. I think that's a real positive thing. So many times, the principal's having to go to so many more meetings and requirements it's really tough to get in the swing of the school, because so much time they get isolated from the school... They're taken away from the building so much... (Teacher at Hank's school)

> [After returning from a district meeting] ...the only thing I regret when I come back, like now, and you see the desk. I've got papers and I'll be going this afternoon somewhere to see someone. (Benchley)

There are also internally controlled variables which may cause or promote interruptions.

> He encourages people to come in. "You've got something you want to talk to me about, please come in and talk." He's hard to get to sometimes because he does talk. (Hank's head secretary)

> She actually tours through the metal works and the wood works. One has to respond to that, even if they make jokes about never knowing where she is going to pop up; the fact that she cares enough to get out of her office to do many things...(Teacher at Margaret's school)

> He is out with people. He's out with kids. He walked into a classroom to tell a student congratulations on something on a sports thing over the weekend... The kid's sitting there with his eyes this big because the principal is coming into class! ...he walks right up to anybody at the counter... he will talk to all the parents, the kids. He makes it a point to do this. (Hank's head secretary)

The potential impacts of these interruptions were softened in some cases using specific strategies to delegate a maximum amount of foreseeable types of interruptions to others who could handle them and by doing as much preparatory work as possible. Examples of such strategies follow:

> I screen all the calls. If they ask for the principal, I need to find out why and who. Nine times out of ten, somebody else can handle the request. (Hank's head secretary)

> He had more time [to talk to teachers] during the summer.... You probably know in a high school it's difficult to communicate with people because they're so busy doing the tasks that they're doing, that to pull somebody off to the side just to pick their brain... There just aren't enough hours in the day to do all the things. One of the good things is the summer. (Teacher at Hank's school)

Thus, Hank delegated routinized sorts of potential interruptions to others as much as possible and oriented himself early to his faculty members' thinking before school even started. This permitted him the freedom to attend to at least some of his own agenda.

Uncertainty

Daresh (1986) has written of several major sources of uncertainty for new principals. He found that new principals had concerns about role clarification - the degree to which they adjusted to new authority and leadership roles and the realities

of increased power and formal authority. Technical expertise issues were of great concern to novice principals; these included procedural concerns (reading computer printouts, budgeting, legal issues, mandate implementation, and collective bargaining) and interpersonal relations (conflict management, tensions with teachers, and community relations). Lack of self-confidence was created by not knowing if they were doing well in the job, mainly because of rare feedback. New principals felt that they were deficient in knowledge of the information base concerning dealing effectively with their own people and lack of awareness of interpersonal support strategies. Last, socialization concerns included ability to read system signs, and meet implicit expectations that they would discern the appropriate routes for survival and problem solving. They felt vulnerable in social and political systems that they did not fully comprehend; they didn't "know the ropes."

Statements made by principals and others during our study indicated much uncertainty related to these and other concerns. Role clarification seemed to be particularly difficult initially, when the principal found himself/herself on the new job and actually in charge of the site.

Benchley, as cited earlier, developed some rather critical questions regarding the conflict of spending his time between the new role as principal and as a father in a traditional family. With his new role came new responsibilities which he felt obligated to deal with before leaving school and yet, he also

regretted spending what he considered inadequate time with his family. He felt guilt when he left school at his appointed time and guilt for not being home more.

> They say your work time is supposed to be 8-1/2 hours, right? I feel bad when I leave this building at 4 o'clock. I can remember only two or three times when I left at four. (Benchley)

There is also a realization that there is no longer a single answer about what to do. Leadership is required to deal with the huge amount of uncertainty faced each day.

> Because you always worry about, "Do you know enough to do your job?' And then you think, "Shoot, I don't even know enough. I can't even tell anybody what this is." It's tough that way because then you start putting the guilt trip on yourself and you really can't. You're never going to know enough...there is no manual for what to do next. (Judy)

> There was a greater feeling of relaxation under the former principal because of the way he came across and his comfort level with his job, himself. And I think people kind of miss that and maybe they felt, at first, that the new principal was maybe a little too stiff, or too formal with what she was trying to do. (Teacher at Judy's school)

> She has to be open to individual styles of (subschool/assistant) principals, but at the same time, I think that leads to a lot of confusion on the part of the faculty as to exactly how things are going to be handled. So there are some areas that need to be maybe more clearly defined. (Teacher at Peggy's school)

Not only were the initial warm-up periods uncertain to the new principals, at least one principal after three years reflected in the followup interview that the entire first year was one of figuring out the roles of all concerned:

> How would I characterize the first year? ...figuring out what the pieces of the puzzle are and where they fit... and I think, really getting to know the people, building, the team of administrators...and getting to

know the people and roles they serve. (Margaret)

Uncertainty about technical expertise included such things as principal concerns about procedures to be followed for various district and state reporting requirements, legal issues,

> Now the technical parts, that's true, that is what I spend my time struggling with, the technical parts. Sometimes getting frustrated because I shouldn't have...I don't want to devote all the time to the technical parts. I want to be the leader and the vision and going out and encouraging and cheerleader kind of person. (Mindy)

and a wide range of uncertainty about interpersonal relations both with, and among faculty, staff, community members, and students. Uncertainty may hamper the ability of one to interpret or predict the behaviors of the other. The prevailing attitude reported in the study was one of "wait and see."

> I think, as a first year principal, she wants to make it clear that she's boss and that she's the leader and she wants certain things done her way.... but, I think, during the year, she's kind of also realized she has got to relax a little bit and allow other people a chance to express their opinions and to not try to force change right away; not try to be dogmatic in her approach. And, I think, that's something she's working on. (Teacher at Peggy's school)

> I think the parents' attitudes are somewhat reflective of student attitudes and I think that, because she is still a new quantity for the students, she is still the same for parents. (Teacher at Barbara's school)

> She was very supportive of the International Baccalaureate program, but the "IB" parents were fearful that she wasn't as supportive as her predecessor. (Parent at Barbara's school)

People problems may sometimes arise simply from lack of certainty about motive and values of faculty, as well.

> You know people have a lot of hidden agendas, including some of my teachers (Barbara)

> ...wondering if your colleagues and friends are going to undercut you if you recommend some kind of change... (Hank)

Lack of self-confidence and questions of personal competence within the new role were, as one might expect from the tremendous variety of skills required, a major source of uncertainty:

> There is a lot about this job that is hitting me that I am not prepared for...(Ed)

> ...you've got to be real careful about what you say. (Mary)

Teachers may also speculate about the exact nature of the lack (or even the existence of such a lack) of self-confidence, thereby creating their own set of expectancies which they use to interact with their attitudes and actions.

> I think she tends to be a little too "this is the way it ought to be" when she is in front of a group of people. I've had some personal conversations with her and I would say that the reason that manifests itself is because she is probably a little insecure. This is a very hostile faculty. There are a couple, I imagine, she feels she can't expose herself to and that's why, with groups of people, she is a little didactic. (Teacher at Barbara's school)

> She has a hard time socializing with faculty; having a non-business conversation. She is kind of standoffish. It's perceive by the faculty as being snobbish. (Second teacher at Barbara's school)

Such initial interpretations of principal behavior may, or may not be valid, but are always present.

> Some of them [teachers] may become a little cynical based upon past experience and with my coming in as a new person; they have no reference with which to trust me. Until we build that bond of trust, I'm going to be limited in what I can accomplish. (Barbara)

Barbara's uncertainty about her teachers' points of reference may have led to her perceived authoritarian behavior. Until initial

uncertainties are overcome, principals may be relegated to speculation.

> If I had to put a percentage on it, I think I have fair amount more support than I do people who are in opposition. Unfortunately, people in opposition are more vocal than others. (Coach)

Socialization concerns deal with the ability of the principal to read, interpret, and decide on a course of action. Early in the principalship, there is a mutual groping to understand the contextual background, both for making a decision and for determining how best to implement the results. Reflecting on the faculty uncertainty of having a new principal:

> I think there is somewhat of a sense of some floundering, perhaps, or wondering just what direction we are going to take as a school or as a faculty, because this faculty is adjusting to her and she is adjusting to the faculty. And, it's still kind of a feeling out process. (Teacher at Peggy's school)

Misreading the faculty at this point can lead to misunderstandings that could cause hard feelings and further hamper establishment of a good initial working relationship.

> Well, something that has upset the faculty members is that she tells you straight out that that is how things ought to be done and, sometimes, it appears that she assumes that people don't realize that it ought to be done. (Teacher at Barbara's school)

> I think she has a difficult time communicating her true intentions. Even though she is sincere, it doesn't always appear that she's that way. (Second teacher at Barbara's school)

Uncertainty which infringes on socialization may also come from external, or political sources.

> That bothers us here...Other people are trying to control what goes on the in the schools. For example. governors who really do not understand education are

> getting together and producing all kinds of proposals without any input from people who are in the trenches. (Harry)
>
> You can see something being done in a program, but then, you watch the governor hack it to shreds. And then you realize there's no funding and something good has once again been robbed from the students. That's very disheartening and discouraging because you don't achieve. (Judy)

Misconceptions and resentments which arise from the rumor mills may hinder the adjustment process, too.

> So many things happen in [this district] in which there isn't much reasoning. The assignments are made not for educational reasons, but for political reasons and, of course, it's always difficult to ascertain what those political reasons are.... Quite frankly, we were let to believe that [Barbara] was put in here for political reasons, or to shape up this faculty, because it has shown some rebellious qualities in the past.... Maybe she had even been here to force an early retirement. (Teacher at Barbara's school)

Fragmentation

Fragmentation of work was a major problem. Peterson (1981) found that a frequently external locus of control led to work fragmentation and task discontinuity for principals. He concluded that this fragmentation made it difficult to make time available for serious reflection and planning, or to assess one's own efficiency. Sproull (1981) found that about one half of an educational manager's time is spent on tasks initiated by others. Lyons (1990) stated that two-thirds of principal time required principal response to others' initiatives, so that planning, reflection, and careful thinking were neglected.

Principals in our study expressed a need for integration of their activities in statements such as:

> It's just like being absorbed in this great big bog of "I need to do all these things." It's like it's not clean, it's just a lot of things you want to put together. (Mary)

Consideration of the various viewpoints,

> You can't please everyone, because when you please everyone and they are at opposite ends, you are saying "yes" to two different things...I see myself trying to please too many people. (Benchley)

high visibility, overlapping needs for attention,

> He is very visible in the building. He is out with people a lot and it's hard to find him sometimes. (Head secretary at Hank's school)

and more interruptions combine to make the principal's day almost unmanageable by design.

> I start out with a list of things that I intend to do for the day. I don't get very far into that list before there is something that needs immediate attention and there's no way that you can turn your back on it. Unfortunately, that just seems to be the way it is. (Coach)

> We have completed the 7th day of required 180 days. I have managed by design one day and managed by crisis the other six. (Coach)

> It is just an ongoing thing. I came in this morning thinking I had an agenda for me and was met at the door with three teachers who had some problems and concerns...It all takes time. A parent calls. You have to check on something...suddenly, the day is shot. (Harry)

Principals expressed a need to cope with the conditions and developed some plans to do so.

> I see myself as sometimes getting frustrated. I see myself as sometimes taking on more than I should, and maybe I should just focus more instead of spreading myself, just kind of focus on it. (Herb)

> Each afternoon before I leave I make up a list of things to do tomorrow. Thus far, I have not completed my previous list from yesterday and by comparison the

> list of things to do tomorrow seems to grow more each day that I am here. (Ed)
>
> I have been dealing with a lot of little fires and it's getting a little frustrating that I can't be more proactive. I mean just get in there. So many people bring so many problems to you that you spend a lot of time dealing with problems and I keep on thinking that I've got to keep the problems where they belong and not take any that aren't mine. This is what I think is the tendency of a first year principal. (Mindy)

They also reflected a sense of frustration at being unable to manage the situations to a suitable degree and become more proactive.

> I don't leave out of here very often feeling very good. I just feel that I have put out all of the fires of the day and not be able to do anything that is really proactive and positive. That seems to be the natural order of things...I have two lists now that I am doing. I have a list on the one side of my desk, one piece of paper that I did. The things that I had planned to do for the day. Then on the other sheet as I accomplished, the things that I have actually done. I write those down. These two sheets very often are not similar. (Coach)
>
> It's almost like you're so busy holding the ship together, you're pouring tar on every leak you can. You just want to keep it afloat, but you never really get time...to do anything really creative to get us going in a better way. You're just too busy fighting the fires. (Mary)

Instructional Leadership

The question, then, naturally arises, if the principal cannot plan and execute a strategy, what is leadership in this context? According to Wolcott in The Man in the Principal's Office (1973), the exercise of real leadership is prevented by the very nature of the principal's job; rather, the work of the principal is to meet others' demands continuously. This, in Wolcott's view, caused principal anxiety about the precise nature

of the principal's role. Rallis and Highsmith (1986) found great differences between managing and leading schools, and did not expect that the same person would excel at both roles. In their view, principals have little choice except to focus on management. Their solution was placement of both a manager and a leader in each school.

According to Playko and Daresh (1989), on examining current research, "an increasingly clear picture shows first year principals who are frustrated in their ability to serve as instructional leaders." Buffie (1989) states that a major reason that principals don't exercise more instructional leadership is because managerial task demands are all consuming of time and attention. Although good instructional leadership has been shown by research to be necessary for effective schools, instructional leadership roles are dominated by administrative roles, because of secondary school complexity, size, and activity level (Lyons, 1990).

Fowler (1989) found that exercise of instructional leadership among principals in her study was rare. One principal flatly told her that instructional leadership was a myth, and there was no time for it; principals were forced to rely entirely on teachers. Martin and Willower (1981) discovered that principals spent 17.3% of their time on activities related to instruction, such as consulting with teachers and carrying out organizational and logistical maintenance. But the instructional leadership role did not encompass active involvement in

instruction or curriculum; their final authority was passively exercised.

Principals in our study and the people around them recognized difficulties in exercising instructional leadership, even at basic levels of teacher assignment and observation.

> Some of the frustrations are that I am not getting into the classroom enough in terms of evaluation. I feel that I need to be there, but paperwork, being pulled out for this and that... (Harry)

The strategies that were used in an attempt to compensate for the otherwise crippling (initially, at least) uncertainty and inevitable fragmentation included using preschool preemptive work and more effective delegation.

> If the principal doesn't have time over the summer to get the picture of the entire curriculum and the instructional setup of the school...and that does not include last minute hiring or stuff like that....then there is no time to be instructional leader. At least I can't find any. (Ed)

> I am very disappointed in myself as far as the observations. I have marked off my calendar for tomorrow and the next day to be in classrooms observing. I have directed my assistants to start doing the same thing, so that we don't let the crises dominate our lives. (Barbara)

Sometimes the initial year appeared to require a massive effort to overcome the daily managerial chores adequately to fulfill the instructional leadership role through superhuman effort.

> [We] had an administrative assistant to do most of the paperwork nuts and bolts things and then, she [Judy] remains wanting to be the director of curriculum; setting up the schedules, the classes, the teachers who will teach what, when, and how, etc. I don't think she is going to be able to do that for more than a year or two. That is a job in itself. You need someone doing that fulltime. Curriculum is a big job. I don't think you can be the principal of a school this size and the

> curriculum specialist for a school of this size and plus all of the other things she does. (Teacher at Judy's school)

One very successful principal, reflecting in her third year, characterized the first year as one big puzzle and the second year as one of establishing common goals and assessing needs together to build a common (and certain) basis from which to proceed. She described her third year experiences as:

> By the third year people knew their roles better. Department chairs knew how much we were depending on them to set the direction for the school and the third year was more truly giving significant decisions to the people that would be driving them...They were clear on what the parameters were and what they were going to run with. And it wasn't just a matter of getting input anymore. It was a matter of more important decisions turned over to them and a new way of working with team building... (Margaret)

One would be led to believe that putting in extra time, delegating more to others, or expending tremendous extra efforts might be avoided with the development of an adequate contextual understanding by all parties (regardless of how this is achieved) and empowerment. This requires time and trust, however, and new principals may be particularly vulnerable without adequate entry time prior to starting on the new job. Several principals did utilize the time interval between hire and entry to work toward this goal.

Solutions

We have thus far attempted to describe in detail the brevity, interruption, uncertainty, and fragmentation which characterizes the work of the principal; the sometimes overwhelming set of demands, combined with the sense of responsibility, which

underlies this work structure; the damage to any sense of coherent planning and instructional leadership that results. The conditions are easier to describe than to solve. Following is a review of selected research which has focused on positive practices which may apply to principalship preparation and development.

Delegation and Time Management

Certain skills, such as delegation and time management, are widely accepted as essential. Principals may be ambivalent about delegation, however.

> Of course I have to be really careful that I don't try to do everything. Because I will probably kill myself, I would be so overworked, but I realize that I cannot be everything to everybody and I can't do everything but I have to delegate. I can see myself having easier times at delegating something where before it was should I or shouldn't I and a real battle inside... (Judy)

> There is a certain amount of delegation that goes on but, ultimately you're responsible for the whole works" (Harry).

Fowler (1989) found that every one of her interviews was pervaded by discussions of the problem of time and meeting deadlines; time measuring devices were highly visible and often used. Principals recognize the need for effective time management:

> Time management is my biggest problem right now. (Ed)

On the other hand, there seemed to be strong sentiment that the problems and pressures far outdistanced the cultivation of proper time management techniques:

> Time management. Tell me how do I follow up when I

have fourteen million things to do. (Mary)

I don't know if there are not time that no matter how you manage your time, you still don't have that time. (Ed)

Hedges and Vernetson (1989) stressed several important components of effective time management for principals: careful and thoughtful establishment of priorities, reconsideration of the wisdom of the open door policy, increasing awareness of how one's time is actually spent, effective use of office automation, mastering the skills of delegation and conducting meetings, and avoidance of processing of paperwork more than once.

Lyons (1990) suggests not owning all problems brought to the principal, effective delegation, careful attention to the supervision role (including substantial communication with subordinates), creation of an effective professional and personal network, and stress reduction activities.

Other Solutions

The proper preparation and initial support of beginning principals is getting much more attention from researchers. According to Fowler (1989), there is wide support from practicing principals for the requirement of meaningful internships. Daresh (1986) asserts that current internship practices, focusing on minor duties such as bus loadings, filling out forms, or the tracking of truants, are inadequate. Close observation, such as shadowing, and some decision-making, would be more appropriate. Workshops, training institutes, and seminars can help with technical issues, as well as interpersonal skill development

(stress management, conflict management, conferencing skills, and community relations). "Buddy systems" that enable novice principals to work with more experienced principals and so obtain valuable feedback, could reduce the legendary isolation of the position. More explicit messages about the right ways to do things could reduce socialization concerns; mentorship such as that described above could be useful in this regard.

Formation, according to Daresh (1990), is an attempt to bring together activities which aid students in blending field experiences and coursework, while creating an appreciation of educational leadership which mitigates the novice principal's anxiety about failure to fully comprehend individual meanings of leadership, authority, control, and power. Formation consists of "mentoring, personal reflection, educational platform development, appreciation of alternative styles, and personal professional action planning."

According to Playko and Daresh (1989), entry year or induction programs should feature "hands-on" exposure to the tasks and responsibilities of administration, the development of strong norms of collegiality, the ability to create support networks, and the development of accurate notions of the nature of leadership, authority, and power. Mentor systems and reflective skills and behaviors are important, as well.

Parkay and Currie (in press) recommended a "tripod" of support for beginning principals, consisting of training, networking, and coaching. Training included workshops designed

to help beginning principals identify good sources of technical expertise in the district and workshops in effective techniques of working with students and staff, such as communication skills and participatory management techniques. Networking included principals' academies, county-wide principal support groups, contact with principals under whom the principal had served, and electronic bulletin boards. Coaching included use of mentor principals, district supervisory personnel training in support, and peer networks.

Hall and Parkay (in press) emphasized the variability of beginning principals in the establishment of a support program; principals might be at any of five stages in the Career Development Model (Survival, Control, Stability, Educational Leadership, or Professional Actualization). They strongly suggested establishing a foundation for success as a beginning principal by maintaining high visibility and contact with everyone, developing the administrative team (including effective assessment of strengths and weaknesses), organizing budgetary and administrative procedures, and mastering established procedures and policies. Principals were encouraged to focus on the content of their repeated communications in providing instructional leadership, master effective delegation, use data well, and empower as many subordinates as possible. Support personnel for these principals at district level were encouraged to develop formal support systems for new principals, including principals' academies, principal-led workshops for modeling effective

practices, and designed relationships with principals at higher and lower stages of development; training in facilitation of the change process was also recommended.

Conclusion

Many of the methods briefly discussed above show great promise and potential. In fact, there are an abundant number of means by which new principals and recently hired principals might be developed. Perhaps the answer lies not so much in how to train principals as in what to train them in, which methods might be most effective for various needs, and at what stages of development of the principalship. In fact, uncertainty and fragmentation are such inherent components of the principalship itself, that training and development of principals must also incorporate these same elements.

Local school districts should design as flexible and comprehensive a training and development package as possible. Principals should have access to whatever assistance is needed in combination with really reflective evaluation within internship programs providing a broad range of experiences in coping with real responsibility and the real demands of the principalship. Contextual variables of the programs should, whenever possible, reflect the future assignments of the principals. Provision for a variety of continuous, ongoing support is also highly desirable, but not in such a manner that it might place yet another rigid time consuming demand on the new principals.

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The Principals

Name	Age	Race	School Setting	Enrollment	Previous Position
Judy	Mid 40s	White	Suburban, southeast	1,583	Administrative assistant, high school
Ed	Mid 40s	White	Rural, southeast	550	Coach-teacher, middle school
Margaret	Early 40s	White	Suburban, southeast	2,386	District director of testing, research, & evaluation
Herb	Early 40s	Black	Urban, midwest	590	Assistant principal, same school
Mindy	Early 40s	White	Suburban, midwest	2,100	Assistant principal, high school
Coach	Late 30s	White	Rural, east	1,332	Assistant principal, high school
Harry	Late 40s	White	Suburban, midwest	1,600	Acting principal-teacher, same school
Peggy	Early 50s	White	Suburban, east	2,500	District coordinator of instruction
Hank	Late 40s	White	Urban, west	1,500	Assistant principal, high school
Barbara	Mid 50s	Black	Inner city, west	1,800	Principal, elementary school
Mary	Late 30s	White	Surburban, west	1,795	Assistant principal, high school
Benchley	Early 40s	White	Suburban, east	1,405	Assistant principal, high school

APPENDIX B

Current issues at time of first interview:

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Counseling

- -planning schoolwide assembly by grade level to publicize new attendance policy
- -seeking more information about how current students performed last year
- -personally tracking student performances and scheduling to match ability w/ aptitude
- -identifying "at risk" students
- -talking with former students at previous assignment (feeder school for current assignment)
- -warning students in GED program that U.S. army no longer accepts GED; trying to counsel into staying in regular program
- -counseling individual student re: career and graduation requirements
- -investigating underachievement by minority students
- -having an art teacher look up former elementary student to involve him in working for school (dropout prevention)

Leadership

- -improving teacher expectations of student performance
- -raising standardized test scores schoolwide
- -increasing minority student enrollment in upper level classes
- -working with student teachers
- -recruiting more new teachers from minority populations
- -generating more parental support schoolwide
- -revitalizing PTA
- -planning expansion of GED program for students having difficulty (from 9th to 9-12 grades)
- -having concerns with teaching methods of secondary teachers (relative to her own elementary background)
- -having concerns w/ homework assignments
- -planning to increase teachers' motivation of students for success w/in classroom
- -having concerns with instruction methods used by teachers (math) in subject areas which do not show grade level achievement by standardized scores from one year to the next
- -wanting to see all students involved in some extracurricular activity
- -wanting teachers to see students in a more positive light
- -wanting teachers to get involved w/ students outside of school and attend "a few games"

Policy making

- -considering open vs closed campus lunch policy
- -having a concern for isolation of special program magnet students from rest of student body and planning remedy
- -investigating ethnic makeup of honor society which is not representative of school
- -exploring grading policy

Managerial

- -working on publiction w/attendance policy to parents
- -suspending two athletes for verbal fight
- -continuing improvement of campus cleanliness
- -working with individual student scheduling conflicts
- -coordinating school management team (administrative team)
- -training new administrative team members
- -setting responsibilities and monitoring administrative team members
- -solving transportation of students (problems)
- -working with schedule in regard to overcrowded classes
- -preparing for anticipated new students to be scheduled
- -monitoring and interpreting change in graduation requirements
- -balancing teacher load w/in master schedule
- -coordinating with parent Accountability Council
- -applying new tardy policy
- -implementing new academic eligibility requirements for participation in sports
- -attending a student council meeting